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2 April 1986

NOTE TO: OGI/FSIC/PI

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FROM: Graham E. Fuller, VC/NIC

SUBJECT: Consumer Feedback

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I think the basic idea of the Instability Quarterly is great, but I do have to admit that I'm a little bit disappointed with the inaugural issue. I guess my biggest single problem is the extensive reliance on quantitative factors--complicated ones--that in the end don't really tell me anything. I fear that I came away from this first issue not really having learned anything much at all about this problem. I wasn't really even provoked or annoyed.

- The indicator sections are very complicated and lengthy, at least to my simple-minded mentality; I have to refer endlessly to tables, symbols and colors to try to figure out what is being said. An overall quantitative comparative judgment, such as the summary indicators are worth keeping, but I wonder about the rest.
- You have obviously devoted much time to the indicators of insurgency; I think these indicators could best be discussed through narrative rather than quantified symbols. Each indicator has its own particular flavor in its own country--I get no flavor or "feel" from the present indicators.
- Instability indicators may well be useful, but these are less revealing--or maybe paint a false picture in isolation from other Third World countries. The pressures for regime change or threats to the regime are common to virtually all countries of the world. To tell me that Ethiopia suffers from a given set of weaknesses tells me nothing unless I can have a sense of how this compares with the weaknesses of Sudan, Kenya, or Tanzania. In short, some comparison with a non-Marxist-state norm would be helpful.
- I guess I have always found comparative instability papers to be misleading in that it is hard to judge which states are really on the critical list and which are not. I recognize this study attempts to do so, but I don't come away with much different feelings about the threats to these states.

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- I question the presence of Iraq on the list. It is not really a Marxist state, nor revolutionary now, nor has it been much of a client state responsive to Soviet positions for many years. If Iraq is included, then so should Algeria, Peru, Yugoslavia, and several other more radical African states.
- I think Eastern Europe should definitely be included in this study; factors of instability are present, the situation differs sharply from one country to the next, leadership crises abound, financial crises grow, ethnic conflicts are there, and revolutionary explosion is not out of the question. Granted they are in a slightly different category, but they very definitely need to be monitored and their state of turmoil has some bearing on Soviet perceptions of its other allies as well.
- I think short essays highlighting individual states' problems in a comparative sense would be useful. What are the generic problems suffered by all client states? Conversely, does being a client state create generic problems? Which ones? Perhaps we should reopen the old discussion about the irreversibility of Marxist states and especially the critical issue of the threshold or criterion by which we label a Marxist state. Did the Soviets "lose" China, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Indonesia, Zaire, or not? Does this affect the Brezhnev doctrine of irreversibility? This issue would be educational.

I would enjoy discussing this with you at much greater length--perhaps at lunch. Please don't let these criticisms of your first publication deter you from continuing a publication that I think ultimately holds great promise. And I may be in a small minority on these criticisms anyway.



Graham E. Fuller

P.S. One last thought--how about a short essay each issue from a selected Agency author reflecting a personal vision of the problem of Third World Marxist state instability--designed to provoke, stimulate and present an integrated vision.

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